



School Board of the City of Virginia Beach  
Regulation 6-64.1

## INSTRUCTION

### **Acceptable Use of the Division Computer System: Students, Employees, Non-Employees, Volunteers**

#### **A. Purpose**

This regulation defines the responsibilities of Virginia Beach City Public Schools employees and students using computer systems, telecommunications, network and Internet resources ("division system") provided by the school division.

Effective performance of computer and telecommunications networks, whether local or global, relies upon end users adhering to established standards of proper conduct. This regulation defines the responsibilities of Virginia Beach City Public Schools employees and students using network and Internet resources provided by public funds. In general, this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the division system. If a user violates any of these provisions, his or her access to the division resources will be denied and disciplinary action taken. This resource, as with any other public resources, demands that those entrusted with the privilege of its use be accountable. Use of the division system resources must support education and/or research or school business, and the mission of the Virginia Beach City Public Schools and be in accordance with all School Board Policies and Administrative Regulations. Access to the Virginia Beach City Public Schools division system resources is a privilege, not a right.

Use of the division system is limited to educational purposes which include, but are not limited to, promoting educational excellence, resource sharing, facilitating innovative instruction and communication and preparing students to live and work in the 21st century by providing them with electronic access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others within and outside the division. Further, the division system will enable employees to upgrade skills and knowledge through the enhanced ability to exchange information with peers. The division system will also assist the division in sharing information with the local community, including parents, local, state and federal governmental departments, agencies or employees and businesses.

#### **B. Division Responsibilities**

The Chief Information Officer shall serve as the administrator overseeing the division system. The principal or department head shall serve as the site coordinator overseeing the system within a school or department/office.

The Chief Information Officer or designee shall be responsible for, among other things, authorizing and establishing employee, non-employee, and student accounts, setting quotas for disk usage on the system, establishing a retention schedule, establishing a division virus protection process, and ensuring that processes are in place requiring each employee and non-employee accessing the division system to sign the Acceptable Use Agreement and for parents/legal guardians to acknowledge the receipt of and compliance with the Acceptable Use Agreement as included in the Code of Student Conduct by signing a "parent acknowledgement card" (see Code of Student Conduct) (See Section E: Parental Notification and Responsibility).

#### **C. Technology Services Provided through the Division System**

1. E-mail: E-mail will allow account holders to communicate with others within and outside the division.
2. Internet: The Internet provides access to a wide range of information in the form of text, graphics, photographs, video and sound. The Internet is a valuable research tool for students and employees.
3. Filtering: The division provides filtered Internet access. Filtering levels for all students are determined by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. The Department of School Administration determines filtering levels for school employees.

#### **D. Access to the System**

The prohibitions set forth in School Board Policy 6-64 and herein will govern all use of the division system. Student use of the system will also be governed by the Code of Student Conduct and School Board Policies and Division Regulations governing student discipline.

#### **E. Parental Notification and Responsibility**

The division will notify parents and legal guardians about the School Board Policy and Division Regulation governing the use of the division system. The Acceptable Use Policy is integrated into the Code of Student Conduct, which parents must sign annually acknowledging that they have read and understand the Policy and Regulations. Virginia Beach City Public Schools believes that computer and Internet access are integral elements of the teaching and learning environment and of uniform delivery of instructional content. Parents/legal guardians will be required to sign a "parent acknowledgment card" at the beginning of the school year acknowledging that they have read and understand School Board policies and regulations governing computer use. Implicit in this acknowledgment is that they have reviewed these policies and regulations with their child.

A wide range of material is available on the Internet, some of which may not be consistent with the values of particular families. It is not possible for the division to monitor and enforce social values in student use of the Internet. Further, the division recognizes that parents bear primary responsibility for transmitting their particular set of family values to their children. Therefore, the division encourages parents to specify to their child(ren) what material is and is not acceptable

for their child(ren) to access through the division's system.

#### **F. Division Limitation of Liability**

The division makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, that the functions of the services provided by or through the division's system will be error-free or without defect. The division will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. The division is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The division will not be responsible for financial obligations or penalties arising through the unauthorized use of the system.

#### **G. Due Process**

The division will cooperate fully with local, state and federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the division's system.

In the event that there is an allegation that a student has violated the division's Acceptable Use Policy or the provisions of this regulation, the student will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and his/her account privileges may be suspended immediately. The student will be given an opportunity to present an explanation for a final determination regarding continuing access to the system (see Code of Student Conduct).

Disciplinary actions will be tailored to meet the specific concerns related to the violation and to assist the student in gaining the self-discipline necessary to behave appropriately on an electronic network. If the alleged infraction involves a violation of other provisions of the Code of Student Conduct or other School Board Policies and Division Regulations governing student discipline, the violation will be handled in accordance with [School Board Policy 5-21](#) and its implementing regulations.

Employees violating the Acceptable Use Policy and the provisions of this regulation are subject to disciplinary action by the Superintendent or designee. Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy and the provisions of this regulation may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending upon the nature of the violation. Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy and this regulation may result in immediate suspension of access privileges to the system. The employee will be given notice of violation and the opportunity to provide explanation prior to a determination regarding continuing access to the system.

Non-employees violating the Acceptable Use Policy and the provisions of this regulation shall have their access privileges immediately suspended and shall be subject to legal action and prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. At the school level, non-employees will obtain approval from and be monitored by the school principal and/or designee.

#### **H. Search and Seizure**

System users have no right of privacy and should have no expectation of privacy in materials sent, received or stored in School Board-owned computers or on the division system. School officials reserve the right to review division system use at any time to determine if such use meets the criteria set forth in School Board Policies and Division Regulations. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to the discovery that the user has or is violating the Acceptable Use Policy and this regulation, the Code of Student Conduct or other School Board Policies and Division Regulations governing student discipline or the law. Once a problem is discovered, an individual search will be conducted when there is a reasonable suspicion that the user has violated the law, the Code of Student Conduct or School Board Policies or Division Regulations governing student discipline. The nature of the search/investigation will be reasonable and in keeping with the nature of the alleged misconduct.

Employees should be aware that their personal files may be subject to public inspection and copying under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

#### **I. Copyright, Plagiarism and Attribution**

School Board Policies and Division Regulations will govern the use of material accessed through the division system. Because the extent of copyright protection of certain works found on the Internet is unclear, employees will make a standard practice of requesting permission from the holder of the work if their use of the material has the potential of being considered an infringement. Teachers will instruct students to respect copyright and to request permission to use copyrighted material in an instructional setting when appropriate.

School Board Policies and Division Regulations on plagiarism will govern the use of material accessed through the division system. Teachers will instruct student in appropriate research and proper methods of attribution.

#### **J. Academic Freedom, Selection of Material, Student Rights to Free Speech**

School Board Policies and Division Regulations on academic freedom and free speech will govern the use of the Internet.

When using the Internet for class activities, teachers will select material that is appropriate in light of the age of the students and that is relevant to the course objectives. Teachers will preview the materials and sites they require or recommend that students access to determine the appropriateness of the materials, links, and sites for appropriateness before requiring or recommending their use to the students. Teachers will provide guidelines and lists of resources to assist their students in channeling their research activities effectively and properly. Teachers will assist their students in developing the skills to ascertain the truthfulness of information, distinguish fact from opinion, and engage in discussions about controversial issues which demonstrates tolerance and respect for those who hold divergent views.

#### **K. Political Use of the Division System**

Employees may not use the division system to engage in partisan political activities as defined in [Division Regulation 4-29.1](#). Employee Associations may not use the division system to conduct Association business.

#### **L. Division Web Site**

The division has established a Web site and Web pages that present information about the division. The Assistant Superintendent for Media and Communications Development or designee is responsible for maintaining the division Web site. The principals or their designee are responsible for overseeing the development and content of their school's web sites.

**M. Division Requirements of Acceptable Use: Students**

The following acceptable use requirements will be stated in the division's Acceptable Use Agreement as part of the Code of Student Conduct, and will be reinforced to students.

**I. Personal Safety (Restrictions are for students only):**

1. Students will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes home, school or work addresses, telephone numbers, etc.
2. Students will not agree to meet with someone they have met online without the approval of their parents or legal guardians.
3. Students will promptly disclose to a teacher or other administrator or school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate, offensive or makes them feel uncomfortable.

**II. Illegal Activities**

1. Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the division's system or to any other computer system through the division's system, or go beyond their authorized access. This includes attempting to log in through another account or accessing or attempting to access another person's files without authorization. Unauthorized access is illegal, even if only for the purpose of browsing.
2. Users will not deliberately attempt to disrupt the division's system configuration or controls, degrade system performance, or destroy/corrupt data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
3. Users will not use the division's system to send, receive, view or download any illegal materials or engage in any other illegal act (e.g. arranging for the sale/purchase of drugs, engaging in criminal gang activity, pornography or threatening the safety of another individual).

**III. System Security**

1. Users are responsible for the use of their individual account and should take all precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account.
2. Users will immediately notify the Chief Information Officer if they have identified a possible security breach.

**IV. Inappropriate Language**

1. Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages and material posted on Web pages. Students and employees will conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate and proper as representatives of the school division.
2. Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful language.
3. Users will not post information that, if acted upon, could cause damage or a danger of disruption.
4. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
5. Users will not harass other individuals. Harassment in this context is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending them messages, they must stop.
6. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

**V. Respect for Privacy**

1. Users will not post private information about another person.

**VI. Respecting Resource Limits**

1. Users will use the division's system only for education and school division sponsored and/or authorized professional activities.
2. Users will not download or transmit large files unless absolutely necessary for school

business. If necessary, users will download the file at a time when the system is not being heavily used.

3. Users will not send unsolicited or unnecessary messages to a large number of people, a practice commonly referred to as Spamming.

4. Users should use the e-mail system only as a transport and not as a repository for storing e-mail messages. Users who need to retain specific emails to comply with Library of Virginia records retention requirements must save them electronically outside the e-mail system or in hard copy format.

5. Employees will subscribe only to discussion group mail lists that are school division sponsored/authorized, affiliated and/or relevant to school business.

#### VII. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

1. Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas of writings of others and presenting them as if they were original to the user. Users will use proper methods of attribution.

2. Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when an individual inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specifies acceptable use of that work, the user should follow the expressed requirement. If the user is unsure whether or not he can use a work, he should request permission from the copyright owner.

#### VIII. Inappropriate Access to Material

1. Users will not use the division's system to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). For students, a special exception may be made for hate literature only if the purpose of such access is to conduct research and access is approved both by the teacher and the parents or legal guardians.

2. All resources accessed by students via school computers or other technology equipment must support the curriculum.

#### IX. Internet Safety

In order to ensure safe and appropriate use of the Internet and its resources, a program of Internet safety shall be integrated into the instructional program for students. Additionally, instructional staff shall receive training on related Internet safety topics.

#### Editor's Notes

The provisions listed below can be accessed through the School Division Website at [www.vbschools.com](http://www.vbschools.com)

See [Policy 6-62](#) – Computer System

See [Regulation 6-62.1](#) – Computer System

See [Policy 6-64](#) – Acceptable Use Policy

See [Policy 4-32](#) – Employee Associations

See [Policy 5-39](#) – Publications

See [Regulation 5-39.1](#) – Student Publications

#### **Legal Reference:**

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, as amended, Title II: Preparing, Training, and recruiting, etc.

Code of Virginia §2.2-3700 et seq., as amended, Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Library of Virginia, Records Management Resources.

Virginia Beach City Public Schools Code of Student Conduct.

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